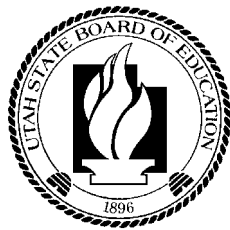


**The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**W. Russel Todd Elementary School
Rt. #2, Box 2468
Roosevelt, Utah 84066**

November 13, 2003



Utah State Office of Education
250 East 500 South
P.O. Box 144200
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

**THE REPORT OF THE
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING**

**W. Russel Todd School
Rt. #2, Box 2468
Roosevelt, Utah 84066**

November 13, 2003

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

**Steven O. Laing, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Public Instruction**

**DIVISION OF
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Salt Lake City, Utah

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FOREWORD

A major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate inservice growth and school improvement. Consequently, requirements include not only meeting the standards of the Utah State Office of Education, but also completing a school evaluation every six years.

School evaluation is that effort by the local school staff to take a comprehensive look at the school's program, operation, and effect. The school determines how closely its purposes and philosophy coincide with its actual practices and the degree to which its stated objectives are being reached. It is a three-phased program: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, November 13, 2003, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to meet the requirements referred to above.

The entire staff of W. Russel Todd Elementary School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the Visiting Team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Robert Stearmer is commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for the generally fine program being provided for W. Russel Todd Elementary School students, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more adequately meet the needs of the students of W. Russel Todd Elementary School.

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State Superintendent
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**Board of Regents Appointments*

10/30/03

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Randy Upton	Business Manager
Lisa McCarrell	Director, Buildings and Grounds
Floyd Collett	Supervisor, Transportation and Maintenance
Dr. Larry Klein.....	Supervisor, Elementary Education
Russell Anderson	Supervisor, School Lunch

W. RUSSEL TODD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

Robert Stearmer Principal

Counseling

David John Counselor

Dr. Norman Bell..... Counselor

Support Staff

Sandee Cramer
Tina Daniels
Melissa Godfrey
Rita Hartle
Karla Heaton

Sarah Kettle
Peggy Killian
Judy Labrum
Pauly Lyda
Sandy McKee

May Mountain
Anita Rasmussen
Leila Unruh
Lydia Van

Faculty

Annette Abercrombie
Gloria Alonso
Loya Arrum
Kim Austin
Lee Ann Baker
Marilyn Betts
Kathleen Chegup

Stacy Clayburn
Martha Ann Cooper
Linda Crozier
Bobby Drake
Rakeyl Gilley
Pamela Hansen
Lance Hatch

Carolyn Heaton
Ranette Loughton
Launa Mair
Vivian Powaukee
Mindy Rasmussen
Ashley Scott
Pam Yama

W. RUSSEL TODD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

“Together, we will be safe, respectful, and successful.”

BELIEF STATEMENTS

It is our belief that:

Students are full partners in learning

School, parents, and community collaboration is essential

Effective instruction and curriculum with measurable outcomes including, but not limited to, testing

A positive learning climate fosters self-esteem and accelerates learning

Empowerment of teachers, administrators, and other personnel is based on teamwork

Application of technology is our on-going responsibility

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Verneita R. Hunt, Cottonwood Elementary School, Granite District, Chairperson

Kerry Jensen, Wellington Elementary, Carbon District

VISITING TEAM REPORT

W. RUSSEL TODD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

W. Russel Todd Elementary School is a rural, public elementary school serving pre-kindergarten through fifth grade students. The school was built in 1956 through a partnership between the Federal Department of Education and the Uintah School District. When the school was built, all the small schools on the west side of Uintah County, including Alterra, Avalon, Ballard, Bennett, Ft. Duchesne, Gusher, Hayden, Leota, Ouray, and Randlett, were consolidated and their children were sent to W. Russel Todd School. Prior to this time a majority of the Native American children were sent away from home to attend boarding school.

The school was named after W. Russel Todd, President of the Uintah County Board of Education during the time the building was under construction and at its completion. Mr. Todd completed 21 years of service as a member of the Board of Education. He devoted many years of his life to the welfare and growth of education in Uintah County Schools and was instrumental in the construction of the school to meet the needs of children on the west side of Uintah County who had historically been underserved. W. Russel Todd Elementary was dedicated on April 29, 1957, with an initial enrollment of 225 students in grades 1-6. There were seven classrooms and seven teachers. The ethnicity of the students was primarily Caucasian (approximately 90 percent). Current enrollment is 305 students, with Native American students making up approximately 80 percent of the student population.

W. Russel Todd Elementary School is located about 25 miles west of Vernal and five miles east of Roosevelt. The student population is drawn from the towns of Ballard, Ft. Duchesne, Randlett, Ouray, and surrounding areas, with some children traveling thirty miles one way to school.

School enrollment figures as of September 2003 show 54 kindergarten students, 54 first grade students, 46 second grade students, 55 third grade students 46 fourth grade students, and 50 fifth grade students. The 305-member student body is approximately 80 percent Native American, 16 percent Caucasian, 2.6 percent Pacific Islander, and 1.6 percent Hispanic. The male/female ratio is 176:129. There are significantly more males than females in the community due to the nature of the primary industries of oil, gas, ranching, and construction.

The unemployment rate for the community is 77 percent, compared to 3% in the Vernal area. The school has a 29 percent mobility rate, with 45 percent of the student body moving from home to home within the school boundary sometime during their schooling

years. Approximately 40 percent of the students come from single-parent families, with 85 percent of the parents having not earned a high school diploma. Ninety-two percent of the students are on free or reduced-price lunch, and about 60 percent have no home telephone. Eighty-two percent of the students are English language learners.

a) *What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?*

W. Todd Elementary School tracked several tests administered to children since 2001. In addition to tracking the CRT and SAT tests, the school administered the Northwest Evaluation Association Measure of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP). This program is a series of electronically administered tests that measure the students' general knowledge in reading, language usage, and math. They are designed to measure growth in student learning.

The results of the NWEA MAP show an annual reading growth of one point to twelve points per student in second through fifth grades, with an average of seven points overall. Math was about the same. No results were given for language usage.

CRT scores in Language Arts shows an increase in Near Mastery and Mastery students over the last three years. Partial Mastery decreased from 50 percent to 23 percent, 2001-2003. Mastery rose from 30 percent to 45 percent during the same time period. Math scores were not charted in a separate format as were the scores for Language Arts. Math scores were found in a larger chart that included Language Arts, Math, and Science results. Math scores were found to be down in three of the five grades for 2003, although four of the five grades did achieve AYP in Math. Only fifth grade did not achieve AYP in either Language Arts or Math. Language Arts and Math were disaggregated by race and gender. This gave good information for teachers to know who is and who is not learning. Further disaggregation is suggested for future study.

In the profile, a section was devoted to the Utah Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration program (CSRD), which helps schools adopt successful reform models and improve student achievement. W. Russel Todd Elementary implemented several programs under the umbrella of CSRD: California Early Literacy Learning and Extended Literacy Learning (CELL/ExLL), the Urban Learning Centers model, Reading One-to-One, the Waterford Project, the Connections after school program, and professional development for faculty and staff. There was a detailed three-year timeline for staff development included in the action plan section. The plan also included extensive information that looked like a report for the CSRD program.

b) *What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?*

The school profile should be a concise report of student achievement, showing where the school has been for the last few years, where the school is currently, what the school goals are for the next six years, and the action plan to achieve those goals. The W. Russel Todd profile was lengthy and included material not supporting the above objectives. Poems, copies of research articles, complete reports for other programs, and fliers for trainings are unnecessary.

The school profile could include more complete data on CRT scores, maintaining consistency in charts for all subjects. Along with the positive data showing improvement, W. Russel Todd Elementary School should include data and charts on areas of weaknesses, as all schools have room for improvement. The accreditation goals for schools include knowing where you have been, where you are now, where you want to be, and how to get there. The school profile that shows this includes, but is not limited to, school demographics and history; disaggregated testing data and charts in Language Arts, Math, and Science; analysis of that data; mission and belief statements; desired results for student learning; focus group reports and brief analyses; department or grade level reports and brief analyses; and an action plan with a timeline. These items will be beneficial to Visiting Teams, as well as to the school community. The school community should be able to easily read the profile and understand the school strengths and weaknesses, as well as the action plan for improving student achievement.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- Include focus group reports and analyses.
- Include grade level reports and analyses.
- Formulate a concise action plan.
- Clearly state desired results for student learning.

CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

- a) *To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?*

The Visiting Team found the community heavily involved with the Utah Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program (CSRD), which included various programs to improve student achievement. The community was also involved with a survey about the school, but no specific data was included. The

Visiting Team recommends that specific numerical data and a copy of the actual survey distributed to parents be included in the profile. The students also participated in a survey, and the Visiting Team also recommends that specific numerical data be included in the profile.

Development of the mission statement involved the administration, teachers, staff, students, parents, and community. The mission statement is well known to the students and community; the Visiting Team was questioned about the mission statement by students several times during the team's visit.

- b) *To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?*

The Visiting Team found that the school's self-study reflected evidence of many of W. Russel Todd Elementary School's strengths, programs, and areas of involvement in student achievement. However, the Visiting Team found a lack of reporting of the school's limitations, and recommends that the school recognize the areas needing improvement and address those needs.

CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

W. Russel Todd Elementary School's desired results for student learning are as follows:

1. Self-esteem as a learner and a person:
 - Willing to take risks, values others, demonstrates self-control.
2. Cognitive development/low to high:
 - Able to recall basic facts, applies previous knowledge, comprehends information, demonstrates creativity, analyzes information.
3. Responsible Learner:
 - Sees self as a learner, is committed to learning, is self-disciplined.
4. Concern for others:
 - Encourages others, shows cooperative actions, is understanding of others.
5. Process Skills:
 - Is accountable for own actions, uses problem solving skills, communicates clearly with others.

6. Healthy Lifestyles/Drug Free:
-- Demonstrates cleanliness and good hygiene, exercises at recess and P.E., avoids problems of drug and alcohol abuse, has healthy eating habits.

Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:

- a) *To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?*

The Visiting Team found that a collaborative process involving students, teachers, staff, administration, parents, and community members was followed to create a mission statement, belief statements, and desired results for student learning. Drafts were created and distributed, meetings held, and final versions written.

- b) *To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?*

The Visiting Team found that student achievement was a priority for all involved. This was a low achieving, Title I school with many obstacles in its way. The principal worked hard to involve all stakeholders in a collaborative effort to improve the education of W. Russel Todd Elementary students. As the CSRD program was implemented, many people embraced the various components and celebrated their success with student achievement. The Visiting Team commends the principal, teachers, staff, and parents for their dedication to children and hard work to make the CSRD program successful.

- c) *To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?*

During the visit, the Visiting Team found that the mission and belief statements aligned well with the school's desired results for student learning. Teachers modeled the behaviors they wanted the students to learn. This helped the children learn what the DRSLs looked like from a different point of view, thus making the whole school a model for learning.

Curriculum Development:

- a) *To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?*

The Visiting Team found the staff heavily involved in teaching curricula aligned with Utah Core Curriculum. One of their action steps is that by the spring of

2004, students will demonstrate an increase in math skill on the CORE Assessment from 69 percent to 75 percent. Another action step states that students will demonstrate an improvement in citizenship by spring 2005 which incorporated the Utah Life Skills. The CELL/ExLL program is very well aligned with the Language Arts Utah Core. This program has helped increase student improvement on the CRT Language Arts tests.

- b) *To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?*

The Visiting Team found that teachers meet often to align the CELL/ExLL program, Urban Learning Centers, Reading One-to-One, and their after school program with the DRSLs. As they meet together and plan their curricula and activities around these programs, they continually refer to student achievement and use data to guide their daily plans.

Quality Instructional Design:

- a) *To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?*

During the visit, the Visiting Team observed a variety of effective learning experiences. Teachers used direct instruction, small group instruction, computer-aided instruction/practice, manipulatives, one-on-one instruction, and a great deal of integration of all subjects.

The staff relies heavily on the CELL/ExLL program as the basis for teaching strategies in the core curriculum areas. The Waterford Project and Reading One-to-One programs are also used extensively.

- b) *To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?*

The Visiting Team found the adult/student ratio to be very low. This gives students the opportunity to have a lot of one-on-one or very small group attention. Other students are serviced by the Special Education Department. Extra time and practice for struggling students are given through the Waterford Project. Students are also given monetary rewards and recognition for improving academically.

- c) *To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?*

The Visiting Team found that a very impressive after-school program called Connections has been developed at W. Russel Todd Elementary. This program

provides three additional hours of time for students to be exposed to academic, social, and physical activities.

The integration of the ELL program is also impressive. The Native American culture and language are not discouraged, but are being used to support student learning.

Quality Assessment Systems:

- a) *To what extent has the staff developed classroom or schoolwide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?*

Students are given a variety of assessments. The data is used to guide student learning. The following commercial assessments are being used: Utah State End of Level CORE Exams, NWEA (Northwest Evaluation Association), SAT, DRA, DRP, and QRI. Also observed by the Visiting Team were ongoing assessments given by teachers to monitor student progress.

- b) *To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?*

The data collected from the assessments are summarized for each student into a one-page overview. This summary is given to the teacher at the beginning of the school year. The teacher then is able to monitor and adjust the teaching to meet the needs of the individual student.

- c) *To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?*

The Visiting Team notes that virtually all students take all assessments. Accommodations are made for those who qualify. The data was disaggregated in some ways, but the Visiting Team recommends further disaggregation for future reference.

Leadership for School Improvement:

- a) *To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?*

The Visiting Team found several lines of evidence of a positive learning climate. A multitude of opportunities for professional development are offered. Some of these are CELL/ExLL, Utah Core Academy, and ESL certification. Faculty meetings are used frequently for training purposes.

It was mentioned by different people who were interviewed that the leadership of the school was able to find funding sources to support or implement desired programs or activities. Commendations are in order to the principal for working hard for students, teachers, and the community.

- b) *To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?*

The Visiting Team found through interviews that the leadership of the school realizes the importance of data and input from all affected parties in making decisions. Lots of data are collected, organized, and made available to teachers, staff members, and parents. The decisions are then made using this data and input.

- c) *To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?*

Careful monitoring of student achievement was observed. This monitoring was done by the teachers, staff, and the administration. Forms have been designed to organize the information for use by the teachers, and standards-based report cards are being used.

- d) *To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?*

The principal was aware of all that was going on in the school. He delegates assignments or responsibility to a person or group, and then supports that person or group in completing the work.

- e) *To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?*

The Visiting Team found during interviews that when a need was recognized, a plan was developed. If funding was insufficient, the principal would find ways to provide the needed financial support. All decisions went through a filter that was based on the school goals.

- f) *To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?*

The Visiting Team was impressed with the organizational structure of W. Russel Todd Elementary School. Through interviews with parents, teachers, and the principal, it was noted that an elaborate organization was formed, with the base

being the School Community Council. Comments indicated that the council was functioning and very involved in the planning and implementation of this self-evaluation plan. One faculty member stated that no one person or program runs the school—rather, everyone is moving toward a common goal or direction.

Community Building:

- a) *To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?*

One of the commendations noted by the Visiting Team was the close working relationship, the spirit of teamwork, and the unity that exist at W. Russel Todd Elementary. This teamwork and unity extend throughout the whole faculty and community.

- b) *To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?*

All faculty members use CELL/ExLL and the staff has developed its B.E.S.T. (Behavioral Expectations and Strategies for Teachers) procedures. These programs provide common vocabulary, procedures, instructional strategies, and curricula that all teachers identify with, which facilitate the sharing of materials and ideas. Teachers were very willing to share materials and ideas.

Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:

- a) *To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?*

The Visiting Team found most of the professional development centered around the CELL/ExLL model. Extensive training has been given to all faculty members. Faculty members are encouraged to attend trainings and workshops. Every other week, faculty meetings are devoted to training. ESL endorsements are a high priority among staff members.

- b) *To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?*

The best way to qualify the productive change and continuous improvement is to see the positive changes in student achievement and climate that have happened during the last few years. The Visiting Team found evidence that W. Russel Todd Elementary School is making great progress toward continuous improvement.

The school's dedication to the various CSRD programs shows dedication to student improvement through researched-based curricula.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS I-XI

W. Russel Todd Elementary School has chosen to become a member of NAAS and is in full compliance with its standards. Most public elementary schools in Utah are not members of NAAS.

Standard I – Educational Program

This standard is met.

Standard II – Student Personnel Services

This standard is met.

Standard III – School Plant and Equipment

This standard is met.

Standard IV – Library Media Program

This standard is met.

Standard V – Records

This standard is met.

Standard VI – School Improvement (This is addressed in the self-study.)

This standard is met.

Standard VII – Preparation of Personnel

This standard is met.

Standard VIII – Administration

This standard is met.

Standard IX – Teacher Load

This standard is met.

Standard X – Activities

This standard is met.

Standard XI – Business Practices

This standard is met.

CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

- a) *To what extent is the schoolwide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?*

The Visiting Team found that all staff members knew and used the five action steps to move toward student improvement to guide curriculum instruction. The five goals are:

(1) 90% of our students will read at or above grade level by the end of fifth grade. (2) Students will demonstrate an improvement in citizenship by Spring 2005. (3) Increase our average daily attendance (ADA) from 93% to 95% for school year 2004. (4) Improve our Written Language Arts Skills as measured on the Northwest Evaluation Assessments “Language Usage” average RIT score from “low” to “Average” at each grade level by Spring 2005. (5) Students will demonstrate an increase in Math Skills on the CORE Assessment from a 69% to 75% by Spring 2004.

The Visiting Team was impressed with the implementation of the action steps by the school community.

- b) *To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, schoolwide and systemwide?*

The Visiting Team found great commitment to the action plan which is encompassed in the CSRD: the California Early Literacy Learning and Extended Literacy Learning (CELL/ExLL), the Urban Learning Centers model, Reading One-to-One, the Waterford Project, the Connections after-school program, and professional development for faculty and staff. The teachers, staff, principal, and community are fully dedicated to their action plan, and the Visiting Team observed these programs thoroughly activated during the visit.

- c) *How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the schoolwide action plan appear to be?*

The Visiting Team observed classrooms, teachers, and students, both during and after school, and is satisfied that the action plan will continue to be implemented. Data is constantly being gathered and used to assess student achievement, thus driving future curriculum development. W. Russel Todd Elementary School has a plan involving teamwork and collaboration to increase student improvement, and has successfully implemented this plan.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends the administration, teachers, staff, and parents for their extensive work on the self-evaluation school improvement process through the Utah State Office of Education and the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools.
- The Visiting Team commends the administration, teachers, staff, and parents for their improvement of student literacy skills over the last two years. Teamwork throughout the school is prevalent, and is a major contributing factor in student achievement.
- The Visiting Team commends the principal for his leadership and positive attitude toward success at W. Russel Todd Elementary. The teachers, staff, and parents feel that Mr. Stearmer has been an integral part of the process. He has accelerated self-evaluation, thus contributing to the advancement of student improvement.
- The Visiting Team commends the administration and teachers for their continued training in good instructional practices and research-based curriculum methods for the classrooms.
- The Visiting Team commends the administration and teachers for extending education to the community through their Parent Center, the Connections after-school program, preschool, and monthly Celebration Nights.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that a condensed version of the action plan be added to the school profile, including action steps, timelines, person(s) responsible, and resources needed.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the action plan be expanded to include goals beyond the year 2005; goals should be aligned with the NCLB goals of 2014, with incremental steps.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the citizenship goal be revisited and written as a measurable and quantifiable objective.
- The Visiting Team recommends that Utah Life Skills be articulated on a separate page and highlighted as an umbrella set of skills modeled daily in the school.